

2019-2020

FIRST LIGHT TRAVEL



Your South Pacific Travel Specialists

NEW ZEALAND

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Abel Tasman National Park

Southern Spirit

14 DAYS CHRISTCHURCH → WELLINGTON LCQW



Greenstone carving



Buller Gorge



Te Papa

Christchurch • Omarama • Dunedin • Milford Sound • Te Anau • Queenstown • Haast • Franz Josef Glacier • Punakaiki • Abel Tasman National Park • Nelson • Wellington

From the dramatic plunging glacial valleys and rugged snow-capped peaks, to the serenity of crystal-clear lakes, be blown away at every turn. The small but vibrant cosmopolitan cities studded throughout the Island bring to life this natural wonderland.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tour through Christchurch to witness the incredible rebuild of the city
- View the Church of the Good Shepherd on the shores of Lake Tekapo
- Spend the night cruising on magical Milford Sound
- Explore the Glowworm Caves at Te Anau by boat
- Let loose in the 'adventure capital', Queenstown
- See awe-inspiring Franz Josef Glacier
- Watch artisans carving native greenstone (jade) in Hokitika
- Punakaiki, home to Pancake Rocks and Blowholes
- Explore the World of WearableArt
- Set sail on Queen Charlotte sound
- Explore Te Papa Museum of New Zealand
- Discover New Zealand's capital Wellington on a city tour

Day 1 Welcome to Christchurch

You'll have time at leisure this afternoon; you may like to take a stroll along the banks of the Avon River before a Welcome Reception with your Travel Director and fellow travellers. **Hotel: Ibis Hotel, Christchurch.**

Day 2 Christchurch – Omarama

See how Christchurch is has rebuilt itself after the devastating earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, and pop into the Transitional Cathedral, the temporary home of the Christchurch Cathedral built almost entirely of cardboard! Later, travel over the fertile Canterbury Plains to soak up spectacular scenery. You'll view the famous Church of the Good Shepherd, and stop for a quick photo with the bronze statue of a collie dog. You may wish to view Mount Cook National Park from the air this afternoon on an optional scenic flight. Your day finishes in the heart of the Mackenzie Country at Omarama. **Hotel: Heritage Gateway Hotel, Omarama. B D**

Day 3 Omarama – Dunedin

Your day begins with a visit to the Waitaki Hydro Power Scheme, an intricate series of lakes and canals on the mighty Waitaki River, and the monumental spillway of the Benmore Dam. Next, travel to the historic town of Oamaru, with its tree-lined streets and celebrated white limestone buildings. Continue to Dunedin, New Zealand's southernmost city. **Hotel: Kingsgate Hotel, Dunedin. B**

Day 4 Dunedin – Milford Sound

Travel this morning over the famed stretch of highway known as the Devil's Staircase before descending to serene Lake Wakatipu. Drive through the towering beeches and rainforest of World Heritage listed Fiordland National Park, catching glimpses of glaciers and soaring mountain ranges. Continue through the hand-hewn Homer Tunnel before arriving in Milford Sound for your overnight cruise. This unforgettable journey takes in cascading waterfalls, hanging glacial valleys, and the sheer pinnacle of Mitre Peak (cruise may not operate on 12 Sep 2019 and 10 Sep 2020 departures. On these dates, you can enjoy a day cruise on Milford Sound and accommodation in Te Anau or Queenstown). **Cruise: Overnight Milford Sound. B D**

Day 5 Milford Sound – Queenstown

Depart this morning for the town of Te Anau, on the shores of the magnificent lake which shares its name and is the largest in the South Island. Cruise to the western shores of Lake Te Anau to the entry of the famous Glowworm Caves to meet your guide. Deep inside you'll be taken by small boat into a silent hidden grotto inhabited by thousands of glowworms. The glittering display is nothing short of extraordinary. Later, travel on to New Zealand's adventure capital, Queenstown, for an extended 3-night stay. **Hotel: Copthorne Hotel and Resort, Queenstown, 3 nights. B D**

Day 6 Queenstown Free Time

Today is free for you to explore exciting Queenstown at your own pace. Plan your own day or you may like to choose one of our optional experiences, including riding the Shotover Jet boat, joining a tour of the region's popular wineries, or enjoying a popular minibus excursion through rugged Skippers Canyon. This evening, consider a cruise across Lake Wakatipu aboard the iconic vintage steamship TSS Earnslaw for a gourmet barbecue dinner at Walter Peak High Country Farm. B

Day 7 Queenstown Free Time

Another full day in Queenstown to tailor your own action-packed agenda. B

Day 8 Queenstown – Franz Josef

Your destination today is the wild west coast of the South Island. Stop to visit the gold-mining settlement of Arrowtown, where more than 70 original buildings from the gold-rush era are faithfully preserved. Sample luscious stone fruit in Cromwell and enjoy the serenity of the region's vivid blue lakes, the most famous of which is tranquil Lake Wanaka. Drive over spectacular Haast Pass, passing the 96-metre Thunder Creek Falls and stopping for a leisurely rainforest walk on your way to the extraordinary Franz Josef Glacier. **Hotel: Scenic Franz Josef Glacier, Graham Wing, Franz Josef. B D**

Day 9 Franz Josef – Punakaiki

Explore the glacier from the air or take a glacier hike (both optional experiences). Travel on to Hokitika, home of New Zealand's famous greenstone. Pounamu (its Māori name) is of great cultural significance in Māori culture and is prized for its strength, durability and beauty. Continue to Punakaiki to view the intriguing Pancake Rocks and Blowholes. You'll spend the night in an eco-friendly resort right on the waterfront. **Hotel: Punakaiki Resort. B D**

Day 10 Punakaiki – Nelson

The Heritage Highway leads you through scenic wilderness to the plunging Buller Gorge and pristine Kahurangi National Park.

This afternoon in Nelson you'll visit the quirky World of WearableArt and Classic Cars Museum. **Hotel: Grand Mercure Monaco Resort, Nelson, 2 nights. B D**

Day 11 Nelson Free Time

On this day at leisure, you'll have the option of journeying to the top of the South Island and embarking on a scenic cruise in the Abel Tasman National Park. You may prefer to take a short bushwalk, relax in sunny Nelson, or explore the town's many art and craft galleries. B

Day 12 Nelson – Wellington

Visit the seaside village of Picton with free time to explore and purchase lunch. Cruise on tranquil Queen Charlotte Sound before heading across Cook Strait to Wellington, New Zealand's capital. Enjoy a city sights tour, then visit the Māori cultural icon Te Papa Museum of New Zealand, where you'll explore New Zealand's nature, art, history and cultural heritage. **Hotel: Travelodge, Wellington, 2 nights. B**

Day 13 Wellington Free Time

Celebrated as the country's creative and culinary capital, Wellington is nestled between two of New Zealand's finest wine regions. Today is yours to explore the city at your own pace. You might like to take an optional experience tour of Parliament or the Weta Workshop, where the special effects for The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit films were created. Celebrate your holiday at a Farewell Dinner with your new-found friends. B FD

Day 14 Farewell from Wellington

Say farewell to your fellow travellers when your holiday comes to an end this morning after breakfast. B



Dunedin



Milford Sound



Punakaiki

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